

PS 635

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THE IMMORTAL

CHARLIE ROSS,

OR,

Stolen from Home.

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS,

WRITTEN AND DRAMATIZED BY MISS DELL. HENDERSHOT.

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Characters Represented.

FRANK LEWIS, a Wealthy Gentleman.

MR. ROSS.

WILLIAM GOODWIN, a Young Lawyer.

ALFRED BAKER, Full of Fun, and Bound to be Jolly.

MARTIN BOLTON, the Rash.

SIMONS, the Fox.

MOSHER, the Thinker.

DOUGLASS, the Bait.

HOWARD RANDALL, a Man of To-Day.

CHARLEY ROSS.

WALTER ROSS.

LITTER, Servant to Mr. ROSS.

POLICE, &c.

MRS. LEWIS, a Woman o Nerve.

MRS. BAKER, a Woman of Heart.

KATE BAKER, a Girl of Sense.

ALICE RANDALL, a Child of Sorrow.

OLD BET, a Woman of Revenge.

STAGE DIRECTION.---R. means Right of Stage, facing the Audience ; L. Left ; C. Centre ; R. C. Right of Centre ; L. C. Left of Centre ; D. F. Door in the Flat, or Scene running across the back of the Stage ; C. D. F. Centre Door in the Flat ; R. D. F. Right Door in the Flat ; L. D. F. Left Door in the Flat ; R. D. Right Door ; L. D. Left Door ; 1 E. First Entrance ; 2 E. Second Entrance ; U. E. Upper Entrance ; 1, 2 or 3 G. First, Second or Third Groove.

CHARLIE ROSS.

ACT I—THE ABDUCTION.

SCENE FIRST. A Country View. A Roadside Tavern, L 2 E, Lights Up. Enter from house Mosher and Douglass talking.

DOUGLASS, (4 C.) Very well, Mosher, then that's settled. But you see, my lad, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, and—

MOSHER, R C. Yes—I've read that somewhere—and I never forget what I have once read.

DOUG. As I was saying : The first thing to do is to get this boy Ross in our grasp without his brother being present, but that's a difficult thing, seeing as how they're always together.

MOSH. (carelessly lighting a cigar.) Hem ! That's easy as thinking.

DOUG. You think so do you ? Well, I hope you're right in your conjecture.

MOSH. There is not much business done about here; the place is lonely enough at all times, so we need'nt fear much from interruption.

DOUG. Well, you're right. We want money, it wont come to us, so we'll go to it in a quiet business-like way, you know as soon as the child is missed there'll be a general flutter, splutter and outcry. A reward will be offered, if it suits us the child will be suddenly found in the usual way, and but, confound it ! Suppose it's put in the hands of the detectives ?

MOSH. Dam the cops ! 'tis them we have most to fear. But if it does come to that, why, I've read somewhere that young bodies don't hold more breath than is needed to sustain life ; so if the worst comes to the worst, why a business-like manipulation of the throat, thus : (imitates strangling,) you catch the idea ?

DOUG. I tumble. (Laughter without, R.) Hallo! (looks off,) as I live, it is our prize !

MOSH. Well, so it is ! How jolly ! He comes to us quite handy like.

DOUG. Now mind—you attend to the boy Charley; I'll keep the other out of the way. The father is wealthy, and won't mind coming down handsomely with the solid ; and that's what we coves hunger for. (Shouts without of "Gee-up gee-up.")

MOSH. Here they come ! Stand aside for awhile. (They go up to Inn.) Charlie and Walter Ross run in, laughing. Walter has a stick in his mouth, to which is attached a cord.

CHARLIE (laughing heartily). Ha ! ha ! ha ! What a lazy horsee you be, Wallie.

WALTER. You are a hard driver, Charlie ; you must give your horse some rest, you know.

CHAR. Now you want to stop playing, I spose?

(Mosher and Douglass come down.)

MOSH. (gaily). Well, my gay young jockies, what's the matter? Horse winded, eh?

CHARLIE (poutingly). Wallie won't run.

MOSH. (playfully looking at cord). Won't run, hey? Well—well—I shouldn't think he could, with such a line and bit as this—why, it's cruelty to animals, so it is.

CHARLIE (innocently). But I ain't got no oder one.

MOSH. What! a nice little boy like you ain't got no better? Here, I say, Mr. Peabody, (to Doug.) juit go and buy a nice silk cord for the pretty boy, will you?

WAL. Excuse me sir, it is not really necessary. Father doesn't like Charlie to receive presents from strangers; he is rich enough to buy anything that—

MOSH. Oh, I know that—

WAL. Then do you know my father?

MOSH. (quickly). Eh?—oh—oh—I mean I've heard people mention his name in connection with wealth.

CHAR. I want the silk cord.

WAL. You must NOT, Charlie.

CHAR. I will tho'.

WAL. Charlie, I'll tell father if—

DOUG. (comes down). Don' prevent him from receiving so simple a present—it will cost but a trifle. I love to see children happy. I had several myself, but they passed away from this wicked world. Heigh—oh! (wipes eyes).

WAL. Excuse me, sir, if I have in any way caused you pain, but I really did not so intend it.

DOUG. Let us say no more about it. If it is a matter of pride on your part to prevent your dear brother from receiving presents from the hands of strangers, let me buy it and you give it to him. Come, let us go get it at yonder store. (Points off R.)

WAL. Very well, sir, I won't refuse you that. (Crosses to Char.) Remain with this gentleman for a moment, Charlie—I'll be right back.

MOSH. (quickly to Doug. as they x each other.) Give Jim a wink—he will run the horse and buggy round to the back of the stable, and then the prize is ours!

DOUG. All serene. Come, young sir. Excuse my impetuosity—but at times—I—cannot—help—(exit with Walter, talking, R. U. E.)

MOSH. (aside.) So far, so good! Now to play the next card. (To Char.) Soon have your nice silk cord—eh? You don't like lemonade with strawberries in it—eh?

CHAR. (anxiously.) Yes—I does.

MOSH. No—d' ye, now? Well, well—who'd have thought it? You wouldn't have some now, eh?

CHAR. Yes, I would—I'm thirsty.

MOSH. Would ye hear 'm once! Ha! ha! (Takes him up in his arms.) Whoo! what a heavy boy you is! Why—why—you almost breaks my arm, you does. To think now that you like lemonade! you shall have tt—you shall have it—plenty of it! (aside.) Now for one bold dash and the game is mine! (goes out quickly, with Charlie in his arms, behind house, L. 2 E.)

Enter WALT. hurriedly, R. That't funny! I no sooner got in the store, when that strange man excused himself for a moment and disappeared. (Scream without, L. and Charlie heard crying, "Wallie! Wallie!") What do I see? my little brother in a wagon with those two strange men—(noise of a wagon rolling away,) ah! they are stealing him away! help! hel—oh! (falls down in a faint.)

SCENE SECOND. Apartment in the house of Mr. Ross. Enter Mr. Ross, followed by servant, L. I E.

ROSS. If any other than Mr. and Mrs. Lewis call, say I will not be able to see them—I am tired and out of spirits.

SERVANT. Very well, sir. Then I'm to admit Mr. and Mrs. Lewis?

MR. R. Or any of the family—at all times. [Exit servant, L.]

I fail to know what it is that depresses me so to-day. My sleep last night was disturbed by unpleasant dreams; and my wife also several times called out in her sleep the name of our bright pet—Charlie. But, pshaw! why let such idle fancies worry me! I know Charlie is full of youthful health and vigor, and I dare say will live to become an old man, and make his mark in the world. Without Charlie near me I would be wretched indeed—he is the sunshine of the house. I need a little relaxation from my business—I fear I am a little too energetic in my endeavors to benefit my business, and thus weaken myself.

Enter WALTER. He starts on seeing his father.

MR. R. Ah, Walter—you are later out to-day than usual?

WAL. Yes, sir—that is—I—

MR. R. Eh? Why, what makes you look so pale?

WAL. Do I look pale, sir?

MR. R. Why do you repeat my words? are you ill that—

WAL. No, sir—that is—yes—I—

MR. R. Walter, I don't usually lose my temper, but you provoke me too far. I command you to speak—to tell me why you look so pallid?

WAL. Father—I—I cannot tell you—

MR. R. Have you been tempted to do a wrong? if so, speak out boldly—don't do more wrong by concealing a little.

WAL. No, father, I have been guilty of no wrong, except it be that my bewildered brain and sickening heart prevent me revealing the terrible fact that—that—

MR. R. Ah! why does such a thought torture me? Charlie—Charlie—he is—

WAL. Father, he is stolen!

MR. R. (staggering.) S—stolen? Charlie stolen? my Charlie stolen? What mean you?

WAL. It is true—the dread truth is out—two men stole him from me, and rode rapidly away.

MR. R. Who were those men—are they known to you?

WAL. I never saw them before.

MR. R. Would you know them again?

WAL. Amongst an hundred.

MR. R. Tell me all that you know, quickly!

WAL. Oh, ask me not, father—I can scarcely speak—I am faint.

MR. R. You must speak, Walter. This is a case that admits of no delay. Oh, my darling boy, where are you? (Exit, supporting Walter, R.)

SCENE THIRD. Handsome apartment in the house of Mr. Lewis. Tables, chairs, sofa, etc. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis discovered sitting at table, R. Mr. Lewis reading.

MRS. LEWIS. Well, I must say, Frank, you are very entertaining.

MR. LEWIS. My dear, I am not, and never was; I am confoundedly dull to-day.

MRS. L. (pointedly.) More so than usual?

MR. L. To give you the benefit of the argument, I will admit that I am stupidly dull.

MRS. L. Any of your business transactions gone wrong to-day?

MR. L. No, spring fever, I presume.

MRS. L. Then you had better find a cure, or it will become chronic.

MR. L. My dear, you are unkindly given to taunting this afternoon; I don't think it generous of you:

MRS. L. Now you are becoming angry! oh, you sensitive men! how very unlike playful kittens are you.

MR. L. I should hope so. I can't always come up to the SCRATCH.

MRS. L. No, not even when the milk of human kindness is set before you. Well, there; I've had the last word, and will annoy you no more.

MR. L. (reading.) "Arrival of Egyptian contributions for the Centennial."

MRS. L. Mummies?

MR. L. It doesn't specify. "Elopement in 'High Life.'"

MRS. L. "One more unfortunate"—well, no matter.

MR. L. "A party of masked robbers—mum—mum—hem—bound—gagged the wife of—"

MRS. L. (starting up.) Did they so? I should like to see the man that could gag me!

MR. L. So should I. But I said there were a PARTY of men—more than one, you know.

MRS. L. I care not if there were 30 of them—I'd defend myself to the last.

MR. L. Don't talk so ridiculous, Sarah. Your would-be heroines always talk and never act to the purpose. Very few women can contend against the strength of ONE burly man, much less two. These ruffians are not in the habit of giving others the advantage over them. I trust you will never have the chance to prove yourself right or wrong in that respect.

MRS. L. I trust I may yet have the opportunity of proving to you, that your own wife is no boasting baby, and that you have never really given her credit for what she is capable of performing.

MR. L. How provoking you are! Why I have always given you credit for whatever you have done. I appreciate your spirit, but deplore your romantic proclivities. Let us not enter upon the subject of obtruse theories and quaint probabilities. Life is too short for idle talking; it is our duty to perform the more important avocations we owe to ourselves; let those dream of miracles who can afford it. (Bell rings without, L.) Ah, visitors! well, I'm not sorry—it will enliven us.

MRS. L. (patting his head.) Speak for yourself, you dear old grumbler.

Enter from C. door, Mrs. Baker, Kate and Alfred.

MRS. L. (to Mrs. B., embracing.) Why, my dear old friend—welcome! I'm very—VERY glad to see you, Katy—Alfred.

MR. L. (shaking Alf. by the hand.) Well, Alfred, have you procured that situation yet?

ALFRED. No, sir—not YET; expect it will be all right on or about the first of next month, though. By Jove, I—

MRS. BAKER. DON'T swear, Alfred.

ALF. Swear? I didn't swear—I only said—

MRS. B. Well, don't say it again—it's vulgar.

ALF. What! Jove vulgar? why its classical.

KATE. Oh, Alf., don't aggravate mother so; you know she doesn't like to hear you use such expressions.

ALF. Why, Sis, it's a fashionable English expression very much in vogue—by Jove!

MRS. L. (to Mrs. B.) There, there! never mind him, he will have his joke.

Come, sit here, I have much to say to you. (They go up and seat themselves.)

MR. L. to Alf.) Ha! ha! wild as ever, eh?

ALF. Mr. Lewis, I can't help it; I'm all animal spirits, without the use of the ardent. Ha! ha! I must have been a funny baby—for I've been funny ever since.

MR. L. Well, my young friend, you have had plenty of time on your hands lately to improve yourself in various ways. You should read instructive books, and—

ALF. Yes, but I've not found it so very HANDY either. I don't know why, but I CAN'T finish reading a book through. Why, If I'm sitting by the window trying to digest some dyspeptic mental food from a certain ponderous volume—I'm not myself. I'm reading of one thing, and thinking of another—the book becomes a myth—myself a reality—of martyrdom. The weighty book becomes too heavy for my delicate hands to hold—comparatively speaking, of course—the book falls to the floor in an ignominious position, when I am suddenly attracted by the appearance of a well-conditioned and nicely developed Tom Cat on our fence; the temptation is too strong; I quietly, as if by magic, find myself in the yard with several young rocks in my hands, all of which are directed against Mr. Thomas, for keeping me awake the night before. The cat gets wonderfully impatient to be somewhere else, and accelerates his motive powers as if influenced by Rapid Transit, which speedy method of travel I greatly admire—when applied to Thomas Cats.

MR. L. How old are you now, Alfred?

ALF. By an acute calculation I find that I have existed upon this mundane sphere exactly 20 years, lacking 3 months, 2 weeks, 29 days, 2 hours, 16 minutes and $3\frac{1}{2}$ seconds; the deficit required to make up the balance in my favor, I am in hopes of catching up to in good time.

MR. L. I suppose you'll soon be looking about you for a—

ALF. Mr. Lewis, it's an actual fact—why, I know not—that I am incessantly looking about myself for some favorable circumstance or opportunity whereby I may be enabled to distinguish myself in the eyes of this ever watchful world.

MR. L. No, no, you rattle-brain! I refer to a circumstance more serious—I insinuated the likelihood of your looking about you for some pretty girl who would not cry you "nay."

ALF. My dear sir, I never loved but two girls in my life—one I couldn't get, the other I didn't want.

MR. L. Oho! you are young, to become discouraged. Persevere, and you'll succeed with some "lady fair" yet.

ALF. Oh, of course; but I'm in no hurry.

MR. L. True—you must sow your wild oats, first.

ALF. That'll be a difficult job, seeing as how I've planted so many already—they're not so easily dug up. But why are you so concerned about my immolating myself upon the matrimonial altar?

MR. L. Because, Alfred, you are dangerous to yourself. You young bloods, blooming forth into manhood, need a guiding hand, other than that of your mother's or sister's. Temptations beset you on every side. The path through life has many turnings—a few are safe, but many fatal to those who are so misguided as to enter them. Now, a good wife would point out the many treacherous will-o'-the-wisps that too frequently mislead youth to dangerous places.

ALF. A GOOD wife, you say—true; but they are as difficult to discover as the North Pole or a North Western passage.

MR. L. Ah, I see. You are a confirmed woman-hater.

ALF. Not a bit of it, sir. I love all the girls to distraction.

MRS. B. (coming down.) Why, Alfred! I'm surprised at you.

ALF. Mother, in this world of innovation, and wonderful social and political revelations—be not surprised at anything—I never am.

KATE. I must say, Alf., you give yourself a very bad character, when you speak of such serious matters in so trifling a tone.

ALF. Ha! ha! Now just listen to Sis! Oh, you are awfully in love—you needn't blush and turn away—you can't deny it.

KATE. Alf., you might have a little regard for my feelings, I'm sure.

ALF. Now hear her moralize! Why, it was only last night I saw Willie Goodwin kiss you till the room rang again! Ha! ha! ha!

KATE, (going up with Mrs. B.) Oh, mother!

MR. L. What! William Goodwin, the young lawyer? I admire your taste, Miss Baker. There is nothing to be ashamed of in honest love.

ALF. That's what I tell her

MR. L. He is indeed a talented lawyer, and what is more to be respected—a man of honor. I've known his family for many years, and they are acquaintances to be well proud of.

ALF. Will is a splendid fellow; you ought to see him play billiards in—

KATE. 'Tis not so! He doesn't play billiards!

MRS. B. What! can it be true—does he go into billiard saloons?

ALF. Who said he did?

MRS. B. You said he played billiards in—

ALF. In the Court Room, yes. You ought to see him play a full game at Law! Oh, how he does chalk his opportunity and handle every cue thrown out. Then to see him knock the evidence, pro. and con., about like so many balls upon a table. Then he watches, takes aim, plays his points well, knocks the run out of his opponent, makes for himself a full score out of the case, and without discount to his reputation pockets his fee, and the blessings of his client.

MRS. B. Dear, dear! drat it all—what a boy it is! I declare, he sometimes makes me tremble for his future.

MRS. L. Never fear—his future is bright enough, and I can well believe he will yet put to blush the idle forebodings of croaking enemies.

ALF. Get along! why of course I will. Is it because a fellow is jolly that he must go to the bad? Fudge! The people who the quickest come to no good, are those sniveling fools who, with a look of sanctity and a smile that smacks of the tomb—a sinister, oily, to-good-to-live-in-this-world kind of bearing—it is those very people who are the most dangerous, and either end their lives upon the scaffold, or in a pauper's grave. The prisons are full of that class despoiled of their artificial covering. As for me—while I have health, strength and a clear conscience—let me be jolly.

MRS. L. You are right, Alfred; smile while you can—when troubles beset you, it is time enough for those to weep who cannot fight against them.

KATE. Yes, but he's NEVER serious—not even in church—not for a moment. If you want to have some important talk with him, he says—“Oh, call again to-morrow—I'm laughing now!” I really believe if he was in deep trouble, he'd look upon it as a mere joke.

ALF. Of course I would. I'd laugh myself out of it and shame the d— hem! world, I mean. A man who laughs from his heart, looks pleasantly upon the world, and does not magnify its defects, why, such a man cheats the doctors and pays the butcher. A slice of good roast-beef for me; a pill for those who like them. I tell you, Sis, you ain't half jolly enough; you go about the house as if you had the cares of the entire world upon your mind. Ha! ha! oh, you're awfully love-sick.

MRS. B. Alfred, what has got into you? Do you no longer love your sister that you so disregard her private feelings?

ALF. What! not love Sis? Why, bless her pretty face, why shouldn't I? (Kisses her.) It's only my fun, Kate; it gets the better of me sometimes. You just wait till I'm 21—that's all.

MRS. B. There he goes again—21! Why, one would think there was something wonderful going to happen when he became 21.

ALF. Why, so there is—I'll be of age—think of that—a man in my own right—an independent fellow-citizen—a free-born American, and a VOTER! Think of THAT! When I'm 21 I'll smoke my first cigar.

KATE. Oh, dear, it'll make you terribly sick.

ALF. Certainly it will—that's the jolliest part of it. I'll lay on my back, close my eyes, imagine myself the earth's axis, and the world turning upon me. Ha! ha! It must be funny!

MRS. L. Have you seen little Charlie to-day?

ALF. Yes, ma'am, I saw him and Walter awhile ago, playing horse. How jolly they were.

MRS. L. Charlie is a sweet boy; one of the prettiest children I ever saw.

MRS. B. Yes, the little dear; he always took such a fancy to me, and calls me grandma

MRS. L. It's curious he and Walter have not been here to-day. They have never missed a day. It is getting late, so I don't suppose they'll be here now.

MR. L. It is curious indeed, as you say, they have always called to see us every day. There is one thing very certain—there must be something wrong. I shall run around this evening and satisfy myself.

MRS. L. Probably Charlie has been playing too much and fatigued himself. I trust nothing of a serious nature has transpired.

MR. L. Sarah, I feel worried in my mind as regards their great affection for Charlie—he is petted too much. Ross seems to think of nothing else but him. It is wrong to idolize earthly things, for our pets are too often torn from us. (Door bell rings very loudly.)

MRS. L. Good gracious! who can that be! How my heart beats.

ALF. Well, that person ain't bashful about ringing door-bells. Ha! ha! that was a jolly ring.

Enter Ross, c. hurriedly, very pale and excited; he sinks upon sofa.

MR. L. Good Heavens! Ross, what has happened?

ROSS, (faintly.) I've come to tell you that Charlie—has—has—been stolen!

OMNES. What! stolen?

ROSS. 'Tis too true. I am not able to give you the full particulars, but Walter saw two strange men drive off with him in a wagon.

MRS. L. Walter saw them—didn't he give the alarm?

ROSS. He could not; the poor boy fainted, and was brought home in an unconscious condition. The shock has so prostrated his nervous system that I fear he will long be confined to his bed.

MR. L. Why, Uncle, it can't be possible that—

ROSS. But it is possible; if there was a doubt existing it would cheer my heart, at least with hope.

MR. L. Who can the two men be?

ROSS. I know not. The law allows men of well known bad character—thieves, outlaws, murderers and what-not to walk our streets in perfect freedom. Can we feel protected while such enormities exist?

MRS. L. Walter should not have left Charlie alone.

ROSS. Sarah, he SHOULD not—but he DID.

MR. L. Have you made inquiries?

ROSS. Everywhere. I've telegraphed to the Police, giving Walter's description of the men—but as yet have received no answer.

ALF. They must have been kidnappers. You can advertise, offering a reward, and I've no doubt Charlie will not be missing long.

ROSS. Alfred, you are too young to know of such things.

ALF. Too young, am I? No, sir. I've a pretty good newspaper education, and nearly every day have seen the papers filled with crimes—it is an age of crime. My brain, small it may be, but it's young and clear to make out this enigma—these men want money—not Charlie.

ROSS. And yet such things are permitted to exist in a civilized country. A man's property, life; his good name and honor are no longer safe from the envious grasp of lawless men. Oh, Charlie! Charlie! where are you? Heaven only knows! When I'll see you again—Heaven only can tell.

MRS. B. Oh dear, oh dear! may be the men will feel they are doing wrong, and bring little Charlie back.

MRS. L. Ah, your too confiding, simple nature deceives you in such a belief. [In tears.] Is it possible that a fiend in human shape—not a man—can have the power of rudely tearing a darling child from its mother's breast? There is no balm can heal a mother's breaking heart, when her child is torn from her. To bury our little dears in the cold grave, is hard—indeed, very hard to experience. We lay our little one in its earthly bed; for awhile it is hidden from us, yet we know that deep down into that little mound sleeps our darling—lies a brilliant jewel that sparkles in our memory. With kindly and loving hands we scatter sweet flowers, tiny buds, like the dear one beneath, to blossom for a day; then wither and die. We feel the presence of our darling, yet cannot see it; but Hope whispers that some day in the Great Future we shall be re-united, never again to part. But to have a child stolen from us! We know not where to seek to find it! Living, yet dead—an intermediate state of existence. Parted from its parents, playmates and toys; learning in time to look upon and call some unworthy creature mother!—oh, it is torture—it is torture!

MR. L. Don't grieve so, Sarah; let us hope and pray that he may soon be found. We will all make diligent search—till the little darling is again placed in its mother's arms.

MRS. L. Does sister Anna know of this?

ROSS. No—no—I dare not tell her—I dare not!

MRS. L. I'm afraid the blow will craze her. But you can't keep such a secret long from an anxious mother's inquiring mind, her instinct will discover her loss all too soon.

MR. L. The best way, to my thinking, is to keep the terrible news away from her as long as possible. She will gradually suspicion, within a few hours—especially when her darling continues to absent himself from her presence—she will feel something wrong, and discover the truth when she is better able to hear and to bear it.

ROSS. I'll try to nerve myself for the best. If I hear nothing favorable by telegraph, I will take the next train for Philadelphia—offer a large reward—place the matter in the hands of the detectives, and await the result.

MRS. L. I fear he is indeed lost to us forever.

MR. L. Sarah, where is your boasted courage now!

MRS. L. 'Tis not vanished, Frank; but this terrible misfortune has prostrated me for a time. Oh, will we ever see him again?

ALF. (C.) You WILL see him again!

MRS. L. I trust—I pray so. But who will restore him to us?

ALF. I will! alive and well!!

OMNES. You?

ALF. Yes, me! It will be jolly excitement for me.

ROSS. What can you do—you have no clue.

ALF. I will find one!

MRS. B. Rash boy! you will be murdered!

ALF. Oh, no I won't! If I am, I'll die game in a good cause!

MR. L. This requires serious thought on your part—don't be rash whatever you do.

MRS. L. He will not fail—I feel it.

KATE, (clinging to him.) Oh, Alf., don't, don't go!

MRS. B. You are the only one to whom I can look up to, Alfred; think of your mother—think of yourself—stay at home!

ALF. I do think of myself. A parent's love cries aloud for the restoration of their stolen child: I love adventure; I am young and strong—and with Heaven's aid I'll restore Charlie Ross to his parents' arms in less than a month.

Quick Drop.

Kate fainting in Mrs. Baker's arms.

Mrs. L.,

Ross,

Alfred.

Mr. L.,

R.

C.

L.

ACT II—ON THE TRACK.

SCENE FIRST. Interior of a wretched apartment—1st Grooves—supposed to be a room in the Den. Door c. Old Bet discovered lying on a pallet of straw, L. c. She is a very coarse and besotted Irish woman. She starts up and looks about.

OLD BET. Sure an' I've been dreaming—dreaming that I was a 'floatin' in an ocean ov whisky. Bad luck to it, it was only a dream, an' th' aggravation makes me mighty dry—so it does. This kind of a sitivation is not to me taste; me delicate constitooshun cannot abare it—so it can't. To think now ov th' children brought here! och! it's hard for the poor mother's ov 'em. There's that pale-faced gal up stairs—purty as a pictur: what do they want wid her anyhow? Th' poor thing's gettin' nigh unto dead—so she is; an' it's not for the likes ov sich as her to be here. But why do I bother meself about other's brats. Didn't some one swear agin me only boy, and had him tuck to prison for life? But he soon died an' left me alone in th' world. Thin why do I pity other's brats? Ha! ha! Let 'em cry an' break their hearts, as I cried an' broke mine when poor Patrick was torn from me. (Three

taps heard at door, c.) Aha! the signal! (Opens door; Mosher enters with Charlie asleep in his arms—wrapped in a cloak.) What! another?

MOSH. (lays Charlie on the straw.) Yes, old gal, another: the richest prize we've had yet.

BET. An' ye've drugged him too much, d'ye know it?

MOSH. Not a bit more than answered my purpose. He's had a beautiful sleep, and pleasant dreams, no doubt.

BET. Th' poor little darlint.

MOSH. Poor? RICH, you mean—why, he'll be a United States mint to us—a regular Bonanza.

CHARLIE. (awake and starting up.) Wallie! Wallie!

MOSH. What! awake—confound it!

BET. Och! what a beauty it is!

MOSH. Bah! beauty be blowed! you can live without it—see how old you are. Don't you get too chicken-hearted, old gal!

BET. Chicken-hearted, is it? th' divil ov a chicken's heart could beat around you—ye haven't got one—ye don't know what one is.

MOSH. And don't want to.

CHAR. Please, sir, won't you take me to my Pa and Ma?

MOSH. Ha! ha! I think not, youngster.

CHAR. Can't I see my Ma and Pa no more?

MOSH. Well that depends a good deal UPON your Pa and Ma. If their purse is long, why, we may oblige him. (Points to Bet.) That there woman's your mother now.

CHAR. No she ain't—and I shan't call her my mama, either. She don't look nice and clean like my mama.

MOSH. Oh, she don't, eh? Say, look a here, young Prince of Chalk, don't you be so precious particular—'cause I've known some little boys to get into trouble. You've heard on a strap for ticklin' little boys' backs when they're unruly—haven't yer?

CHAR. My papa never hurt me—I ain't a bad boy.

MOSH. Oho! your education has been awfully neglected. So if you ain't careful I'll give you a few lessons in How-to-catch-a-whipping—so that's settled. You'll find us first rate play-fellows here. We can break a head, cut a throat and pick a pocket in rare style. You be a good boy, and I'll teach you how to make a great man of yourself, and if you're apt, and follow my advice, who knows but you'll some day sit in Congress! so follow your dear father's advice—I'm your dear father, d'ye see, and—

CHAR. You AIN'T my father—you is too ugly and dirty.

MOSH. What! you young devil, I'll—

BET. Ha! ha! Don't ye get angry wid him—he only tells the truth.

MOSH. Get out of my way, you old hag!

BET. Hag, is it? Ha! ha! Don't ye use sich heavy words—I've got a tongue as well as yerself.

MOSH. Put the youngster to bed; d'ye hear?

CHAR. I don't want to go to bed—I want my Pa and Ma!

MOSH. Oh, ye do, d'ye? Is there anything else ye want? Don't be bashful—speak right out. We'll get ye the moon, and two or three dozen stars, and a pound of the sun, if ye want 'em. Eh! oh, ye don't! Well, I'm sorry—'cause ye can have 'em, ye know, if ye like. Put him to bed; d'ye hear? I'll go up stairs and see what's going on there. (Exit, L. 1 E.)

BET. Come, I must put ye to bed!

CHAR. Won't you take me to my Papa and Mama?

BET. Och ! me darlint, I dare not if I could—an' I don't know yer father an' mother, if I would.

CHAR. Why won't you ?

BET. D'ye think I want me throat cut for th' likes ov ye—ye little hop-o'-me thumb ? Would ye hear him talk foolishness, now. Come, ye must go to bed an' drame ov bein a great man. Why didn't me brother Phil come to this beautiful country ? He was here only one year an' he became an American citzen an' voted ! so he did. Then he got in a scrimmage—tipped a man a few light blows on th' sconce—sarved two years in a certain stone house wid small winders ; and at the end ov five years he was elected Alderman—so he was. He's dead now—the broth ov a boy ! He lost his breath moighty sudden like—I won't say how—oh, but he was a great man. Och ! why did he die ?

Re enter MOSH. Hallo ! not to bed yet, eh ?

BET. Well, I'm goin'. The young gintleman an' meself were talkin' about POLLY'S-TICKS.

MOSH. Bah ! Instead of him sleepin in the usual room, I'm goin' to take charge of him myself. He's a valuable jewel, and might get lost. (Pulls Charlie over to him.)

BET. What d'ye mane by that ?

MOSH. You can take any meaning from it you choose.

BET. D'ye mane to insinivate that I'm not to be trusted ?

MOSH. Few women are with such a secret. I don't know why you should be more than the rest.

BET. I've done enough dirty work for ye, an' thin ye turn agin me an' say I'm not to be trusted.

MOSH. Well, you ain't. You drink too much whisky—you're drunk most of the time, and a drunkard ain't to be trusted with important matters. The next time I see you with a whisky bottle, you'll get into trouble—you understand ?

BET. I understand. (Aside.) I'll have me drop ov th' crather in spite ov ye an' th' divil. (Aloud.) Shall I take th' boy ?

MOSH. No, I tell you—d'ye hear—go to bed ! (Bet goes out R. sulkily.) The old fool ! Come here, Peter !

CHAR. My name's Charlie, sir !

MOSH. I tell you it's Peter !

CHAR. It ain't !—I know !

MOSH. (Drawing a long cow-hide from the inside of his coat.) Is it Peter or not ! eh ? Say your name is Peter Smith or I'll flay you alive.

CHAR., (falling on his knees.) Y—yes, sir !

MOSH., (threateningly.) Yes, sir, what ?

CHAR. My—my name is—Peter Smith !

MOSH. Very good—you're getting on right smart. I've hopes on you yet. (Aside.) His father has offered a reward of \$20,000 for his recovery. No one knows of this boy as Charlie Ross except Douglass and myself—the rest of the gang must know nothing of it. I'll wait till he increases the reward a few thousand more, and if the detectives don't bother me—then the child's—the money's mine, and then ho ! for England, to live a RESPECTABLE life and cut a dash. Ha ! ha ! Come you, Peter Smith, come with me. (Exit, R. with Charlie.)

SCENE SECOND. Exterior of Den. A row of dilapidated houses. A practicable door in house, c. (flat.)

Enter SIMONS, (cautiously.) Now for business. Money is scarce, and with me it's scarcer. Those children must be turned into cash—and that immediately. (Takes out letter.) This letter must to Bolton as soon as possible—yet I must not take it myself—there's a fellow watching me yonder. I will get some boy to do the job. That young heires imprisoned in the Den ought either to put out of the way, or my trouble better paid for. What a state the country is in, to be sure! Why, even a thief will not act honest now-a days—not even to a pal. I must discover some other lay, and go it independently, on my own hook. (Looking off, R.) Hallo! here comes a young fellow dressed very poorly. Now I don't suppose he'd be particular as to how he earned a dollar. I'll enlist his services—here he comes.

Enter Alfred, R., dressed in an old suit of clothes.

SIM. (tapping him on the shoulder.) Say, you're wanted!

ALF. (pretending alarm.) Eh? what for?

SIM. (aside) Hello! he's surely in the business. (Aloud) Why for that little affair the other night.

ALF. (aside) He's a thief or a detective, and thinks I'm one of the swell mob. Ragged clothes always get a man into trouble. It's jolly funny. I'll gammon him—he may be a clue. (aloud) Very well, Mr. Detective, I'm ready—put me in the jug if you wish it—I'm fly.

SIM. (aside) I'm right—he's the man I want. Thinks I'm a detective. How mistaken he is. (aloud) Well, I won't bother you this time.

ALF. (aside) Nor any other time, eithtr. (aloud) Thank'ee.

SIM. (hand on his shoulder) Are you busy?

ALF. Awful!

SIM. About what?

ALF. Doing nothing.

SIM. Nonsense!

ALF. That's what I say.

SIM. Do you want to earn a dollar?

ALF. Don't I? (turning out pockets) Look in them 'ere sockers and see if they ain't in need of scrip.

SIM. Well, they does, rather. Are you honest?

ALF. Honor among thieves, you know.

SIM. What!

ALF. Gentlemen, I mean, in course.

SIM. Well, I've got a certain bit of paper here with private writing on it. Now I want to get it to a certain place, and I want an answer. (showing note) You'll get your money, never fear. Mind, don't you let any one see you enter the place, for I—

ALF. What place?

SIM. Why, here's the address. (gives letter) See? and don't let any one see you leave the place, d'ye mind?

ALF. Why are you so cautious, eh?

SIM. Well, I've got my reasons.

ALF. Oh, you have, have you? Say, look a-here old 'un, no tricks on travellers, you know. I'm not a young man from the country, but I'm a young man from prison lately—I've had enough of it—five times enough of it. I'm fly, I am, and I've no wish to get nabbed again.

SIM. Oh, this is all right—it's reg'lar biz—this is. You deliver that, get an answer, and bring it to me—see? May be then I'll have another job for you—see?

ALF. (aside) Who knows but what this may lead to something. I'll keep my eyes

open and go it. (aloud) I say, Rocks, have you a bit of sweetmeat about your clothes?

SIM. (presents large plug) Tobacco! certainly—nibble as much as you like.

ALF. (bites off a large piece and pretends to chew it) That's snifty stuff, that is. Have yer any budge laying around loose?

SIM. This is a knowing one—this is—now he wants whisky. He's one of the right sort—he's a trump, he is—he'll be useful. (aloud, giving flask) I think after we know each other better, we'll be close friends—eh?

ALF. Shouldn't wonder—especially if we get in a cell together.

SIM. Don't talk of such things—it gives me the epizootic of the heart. Come, you deliver the letter—get the answer, and bring it to me. I'll wait for you on the corner—understand? (exit, R.)

ALF. I think I do—a little more than you care to have me. (looks at letter) Eh? Why—(looking around) there's the very house! why didn't he say so, or deliver it himself! Well, to work—who knows; I may be on the right track now—a kind of lucky detective sailing with the tide. (knocks at door in flat) I wonder what kind of folks my friends inside are. (knocks) They don't hurry much—taking dinner, maybe. (knocks) Don't trouble yourselves on my account. (door opens and old Bet appears) Hallo! (starts back) The devil's own aunt!

BET. What does yer want?

ALF. Mr. Martin Bolton, Esquire.

BET. Don't know no sich person.

ALF. You don't?

BET. I don't!

ALF. You do!

BET. Do I?

ALF. You DOES!

BET. Well, then, I don't!

ALF. I tell you he is here, and I wants to see him, I does. What d'ye mean by keeping sich a downy cove like me a standing in the open air!—does yer want to give me the dampness of the head?

BET. Oh, I see; ye are one ov 'em, 'eh?

ALF. ONE of 'em! I'm two of 'm rolled into one. I'm a reg'lar out-and-outer. But as business is biz., 'spose you trot in and tell Mr. Bolton that a gentleman—that's me—is a waiting for him.

BET. Very well—I'll tell him—I'll tell him! (shuts door and disappears.)

ALF. How particularly careful they are. I must know of what is going on inside of that house, and I will, too.

Enter Bolton from house.

BOLTON. You want to see me?

ALF. If you are Martin Bolton, I do.

BOL. Well, I believe that's my name—what's the text?

ALF. Well, I've got a sort of a BILLY-DUCKS for you.

BOL. A letter, eh! (takes it) Where did you get it?

ALF. It was given me by a jolly old cove I saw about here. He told me to deliver this to you, get an answer, and I would receive the jolly sum of \$1.

BOL. (aside, reading the letter) Humph! just as I expected; so I was about to send a note myself—as I have it already written. I'll send it by this fellow as the answer. I dont know what we are going to do about the girl. The old fellow what hired us to do the job expects that the girl has been put out of the way. She is too beautiful—I can't do it! She keeps getting worse and worse every day, and if

there's nothing done for her soon she'll die on our hands. I must talk the matter over to the boys. (to Alf., giving note from pocket) Here's the answer—that's all. (Exit into house.)

ALF. (solus) Good enough! Ha! ha! here's a treat for me! If I am not mistaken, I am among the very people from whom I can learn all about Charley. There's no one looking—shall I?—I will! (opens letter and reads) "The girl is still alive; I don't know what to do with her; she is very ill—I will do no murder in this case." What genial people these are to be acquainted with—it's through this kind of people that undertakers live. (reads) "She needs some one to take care of her. The old 'un is too drunk to nurse her. Do you know of any girl likely to suit?—one who don't know too much. Bolton." (seals letter) I am on the right track. I must manage to release that poor girl, whoever she is. But how! Ah! I have it—they want a girl—a nurse. By Jove—I'll turn myself into a girl—it'll be jolly fun. Here comes the old fellow for the answer—he's got tired of waiting.

Re-enter Simons, R.

SIM. Well did you find the place, eh?

ALF. (giving letter) Well, yes—I didn't have far to go. Ha! ha! You're a deep one, YOU are. I came near not seeing the cove, though.

SIM. How so?

ALF. Why, there was an old gal there what said as how Mr. Bolton wasn't in, and—

SIM. Oh, it was old Bet.

ALF. You bet—old and ugly enough, to be sure.

SIM. She's up to snuff.

ALF. Yes, she looked snuffy.

SIM. (reading letter) Hem! Well, that's all—thank you—good bye!

ALF. Oh, yes, and at the same time—oh, no! (holding out hand) Shell out—you can't hang up in this 'ere shop!

SIM. (shaking his hand) Oh, ah—good bye!

ALF. Say, looker here—I want that dollar.

SIM. Eh! oh, oh, yes—I forgot. (gives note.)

ALF. (looks at and hands it back) Oh, no you don't! I've seen too much of the queer in my time.

SIM. (giving him another) You're mighty particular. (aside) This is a sharp fellow.

ALF. I wouldn't mind about the dollar for myself, but you must know I've got a sister what is a deaf mute—she ain't got no work now—she goes out nursing when she can, and—

SIM. Ah! does your sister want a situation?

ALF. Well. I should say she did, boss.

SIM. Does she understand her business well?

ALF. She's right smart, you bet.

SIM. Can she keep her tongue still?

ALF. She has to—didn't I tell you she's deaf and dumb?

SIM. So much the better. If she wants the situation you can bring her down to-night. Tell her to give three taps at yonder door. But how will I know it's all right?

ALF. Well, I can't come with her, as how—I've got a job on hand to-night, and will be away—so take this! (tears a button from coat) She will hand you one exactly like it, and then you'll know it's her.

SIM. Very good! I'll be there in an hour. Success to your little business to-night—don't be greedy—ha! ha!

ALF. Oh, no, I won't! Ha! ha! Well, I should say I've succeeded A. I., so far. I'll run home, put on one of Katie's dresses—get Sammy Thorpe to help me if necessary—the poor girl—learn all I can—and raise the devil generally. (runs off, R. I E.)

SCENE THIRD. The Den. The stage divided down the c., making two apartments. Door in partition connecting the two rooms. Window in room R., door in room L. Bolton in room L., reading; chairs on; table and chairs in room R.; a couch in room R., upon which is Alice very pale; scene extremely dirty; Bet sitting in a corner of room R., smoking a clay pipe; moon through window upon the face of Alice; music P. P. "nix my dolly pals, etc."

BOLTON. (throwing down paper) Damn the fools—they have put the affair in the hands of the detectives. (walking about) If things don't take a more favorable turn soon, I'll send the boy off to California to some of the miners—they'll make short work of him.

Enter Simons in room L.

SIM. Hallo, Bolton!

BOL. Ah, Sim. Glad to see you. I say, why did you send that boy with the letter—why didn't you come yourself?

SIM. Because I saw a cove laying about the street watching, I thought.

BOL. A detective?

SIM. I don't know—I didn't recognize him as one of our old friends.

BOL. A new importation, herhaps, working up the Ross case. Well, he's smarter than us if he gets him from our detective-proof safe—that's all I have to say,

SIM. You're right. I've engaged a nurse for the sick girl.

BOL. What is she like?

SIM. Don't know—haven't seen her.

BOL. What the devil d'ye mean?

SIM. Why, I've engaged her through her brother.

BOL. Who's her brother?

SIM. The young fellow what brought the letter to you.

BOL. Well, what's his game?

SIM. Oh, he's one of the boys.

BOL. Is he? Have you got a soft spot in your bullet head? Why did you do such a foolish piece of business?

SIM. Oh, it's all right—the girl's a deaf mute—just the kind we want.

BOL. Well, I hope it's all right. I tell you, look out for the cops! They'll try all manner of dodges, and if one of 'em once gets in here, it'll be tough work for us.

SIM. Never fear me; I'm awake; she won't bla; 'cos why?—she can't. When she comes I'll ask her all the necessary questions in writing, and instruct her about the sick girl. Have you heard anything from New York to-day?

BOL. Yes, I received a letter from Stumpy Jack. He says they are very sharp there just now, and wants us to take some of the chicks here, because they've got more there now in their keeping than they can look after.

SIM. Well, we can't do it; we've got more on our hands now than we can attend to. It's dangerous—take my advice—be careful.

BOL. Well, you are right. I don't like those strange fellows hanging around here.

We must hold a conference with all the boys to-night. Elder is a regular blood hound, and assumes as many disguises as the devil has colors. We must get rid of some of our overplus population; they cost too much laying so long on our hands, and as rewards are not offered to suit us, I don't see the use of giving ourselves so much trouble.

SIM. Well, something must be done, and that soon, for if we should be discovered by— (three taps at door.) Ah, that's the signal!

BOL. What signal?

SIM. The one I told the girl to give. (opens door and Alf. enters dressed very dirtily in an old female dress, hood, etc., his face dirty and fully disguised—he comes down.) So at last! Now to see if this is the one we expect. (draws pistol and places it to the head of Alf., he holds up button which Simons takes.) All serene—'tis the nurse. Here's the button!

BOL. (Looking at him fixedly.) Humph! Dirty as the devil! The sight of her is enough to kill instead of making well a sick girl. Call Bet!

SIM. (Opens door connecting with the room R., and calls Bet, who has fallen asleep.) Here, you old hag! wake up—stir your stumps, and put out that pipe! You'll set the place afire some day, or ignite the whisky inside of you, and cremate yourself.

BET. Niver ye mind that—ye have no insurance on me.

SIM. No—that's lucky for me. Here, that's the new nurse. You come with me while I question and give her instructions. (he beckons Alf. to follow, and both go into room R. Simons sets at table and writes questions to Alf., he replying in writing.) Bet, you had better get her something to eat. I'll attend to her.

BET. All right it is. (aside.) Aha! they throw me aside, do they? Let 'em look to it—I'll have revenge—bitter revenge!! (exits through door R.)

Enter Mosher in room L.

MOSH. Hallo, Bolton.

BOL. Ah, just the man I want to see. How about the detectives?

MOSH. As thick as peas in a basket. They are all hungry for the reward.

BOL. Well, that's business. Nothing new?

MOSH. Nothing very. Where's Simons?

BOL. Here he is. (enter Sim. from room R.) Well, is the girl all right?

SIM. She is. She'll be a great help to us.

BOL. Here; sit down! We must talk over business in the usual quiet way. (they sit around table and converse in dumb show.)

ALF. (In room R) So far, so good. (sees Alice.) So that's the sick girl. How beautiful she is. (goes up to her.) Don't be afraid—I come to save you!

ALICE. (raising up.) You?

ALF. Yes—hush! I'm in disguise—I am a man.

AL. Do I know you?

ALF. No.

AL. Oh, for Heaven's sake don't deceive me—don't subject me to further torture.

ALF. Believe me; I am sincere in my determination to rescue you.

AL. If that be so, how did you know of me—what is your purpose—why did you come here?

ALF. I am in search of a darling child named Charley Ross, recently kidnapped. I heard of you accidentally—contrived to get myself hired as your nurse to rescue you. Why are you here?

AL. I was taken from my friends a year ago.

ALF. When were you brought here?

AL. About six months ago.

ALF. What were you stolen for?

AL. I was entrapped—I scarcely know why, yet I have my suspicions, but care not to give them utterance.

ALF. Are your folks wealthy?

AL. My father was very wealthy; but both he and my mother are dead.

ALF. What is your name?

AL. Randall.

ALF. Randall—Randall! Why, I had some friends of that name. How long have you been ill?

AL. Several months—but I don't exactly know how long.

ALF. Poor girl! I will save you from this vile den, or die in the attempt.

AL. Oh, do not risk yourself for my sake—you know not the desperate character of the men you have to deal with.

ALF. Oh, yes I do. In a case of right I'm a match for the devil and all his lesser imps. I have made every preparation for your escape. (goes to window) There's Sammy—it's all right. Are you strong enough to undergo the excitement?

AL. I will brave all to escape from this place!

ALF. Bravely spoken! (wraps blanket around her) Don't be afraid; I mean you no harm. My friend is without who will convey you to my home, where you will receive proper treatment. (whistles low—it is answered through window; lifts her from bed and out of window) Be careful Sammy—make no noise. There—so—that's right. He descends the ladder with her—that's fine—he places her in the buggy, and—and away they go! That's jolly! Now for the next dodge. I'll fool the villains in spite of their teeth. Where's a piece of rope? (finds a piece in corner) Ah! here we are. (sits in chair and ties himself in it) Come, now; the Davenport brothers couldn't beat that. Now I wish some one would come—ah! they do. (drops his head upon his breast)

Enter Bet, R., with tray.

BET. There ye are, and—(sees Alf. in chair) eh! what do I see? tied in th' chair, and—(looks around) an' the' girl gone! Help! help!

BOL. (starting up) Ah! what's that? (all rush into room R.) Damnation! the girl gone? speak!

BET. (unties Alf.) I don't know anything about it. I went to get this girl something to eat, an' whin I comes back, I finds one girl gone—the other tied in the chair.

MOSE. There's something wrong—there's foul play here! Who's this girl?

SIM. Oh, she's all right—I got her.

BOL. Here—we must have an explanation of this. (takes paper and pencil from pocket, hands them to Alf., who writes—after which Bolton reads) What's this! "Three men came in through the window—knocked me over the head—tied me to the chair—lifted the girl out of the window, and disappeared." We are discovered. We must change our quarters to Terry's Alley.

ALF. (aside) Indeed! I'll be there to see you—I know the place well.

BOL. Why, that girl was worth \$5,000 a year to us.

ALF. (aside) Well, she ain't now.

BOL. Whenever we wanted money, I went to her uncle, who paid me to get rid of her, so he might handle her fortune; he thinks we killed the girl, and so when we are in want of the needy, I make him a call, get the necessary sugar to sweeten our pockets, and walk off royally—for the old codger don't dare to deny me—he's in my power.

ALF. (aside) And your secret is in mine.

BOL. (pointing to Alf.) That girl is a fraud—'tis she who has done this!

MOSH. You're right—what shall we do with her?

BOL. Wring her neck!

SIM. Say, look here! this girl is innocent of all this—there is a traitor amongst us, but it is not the girl. More like Bet, if any one.

BET. Ye lie! (aside) Suspected again, am I? aha! I'll give ye cause to say that soon—I'll warm ye all.

MOSH. (to Sim.) You're a fool for bringing a strange girl here. It's such fellows as you that get the Royal trade in trouble—what will become of us all?

BET. Och! would ye kill the poor dummy—it's ashamed I am ov ye all.

MOSH. You keep quiet if you know when you're safe. Boys, if this girl escapes us we are lost—so upon her to the death! She dies! (they are about to rush upon him, when he draws two large revolvers from under his shawl and presents them. Chord—tableaux.)

ALF. You lie! I'll live to crush you all!

BOL. Ah! it's a man?

MOSH. 'Tis a detective. We are betrayed.

SIM. Down with him! (they make a rush.)

ALF. (getting up to window) Back! back, I say—for your lives! move one step to follow me, and I'll make you food for devils!

MOSH. Are you all cowards? then I'm not one. (draws pistol and fires) This to your heart!

ALF. Missed! ha! ha! This to you! (fires several shots—Mosher falls—the others shrink back—Bet on her knees—Alf. half through window presenting pistols—tableaux, and end of Act Second.)

ACT III—SEEKING.

SCENE FIRST.—Department in the house of Mrs. Baker; table, sofa, chairs, etc.

ALF. (Without) Oh, come in—come in! (enters pulling in William Goodwin through door c.) Well, for a lawyer, you have the least cheek of any of that brazen fraternity I ever met.

GOOD. Alf., I don't wish to intrude upon your sister's time under the present circumstances; the poor girl you rescued has more claim than I upon her attention.

ALF. Why, what a jolly cake you are lately, Will. Come, now, I see how it is; you've had a scratch between you—the pretty pussy cats have been quarreling—and you want to make it up, but lack the courage for an interview.

GOOD. You don't understand me.

ALF. Oh, yes I do; better than you think for—

GOOD. Alf., allow me to say—

ALF. Here comes Kate, now.

Enter Kate R.

KATE. Ah, William—I'm *so* glad to see you!

GOOD. (Kissing her) Dear, dear Kate!

ALF. Hallo! the wind's in the right quarter, after all. I had better tack about, sail out of this tide, and cast anchor in some distant harbor, out of reach of their love-firing. (going.)

GOOD. Alf., Kate tells me that Miss Alice is desirous of communicating her sus-

picious relative to her kidnapping; if you think she is able to do so, why, I am ready to hear her story, and give her any legal advice necessary.

ALF. (Grasping his hand) Will., you're a trump! I'll bring her. (aside to him) I heard the villains acknowledge the fact, but did not dare to reveal the same to Alice—she is rather weak yet—so don't say I told you. (exit R. singing, "It's better to laugh than be sighing.")

GOOD. Dear Kate, it would afford me only the more pleasure if, by serving her in her misfortune, I may, perchance, gain a smile of approval from those ruby lips.

KATE. Ah, flatterer as you are—you speak but as a lawyer in the court.

GOOD. In the court of love, pleading his own case, and summing up a brief.

KATE. Oh, but you are never BRIEF when talking of love matters.

GOOD. Indeed! then are you an obdurate juror. Will my plea of devoted love fail to touch your heart? Is your verdict for or against my suit?

KATE. The judge has heard the summing up, and charges the jury to bring in a verdict for—

GOOD. For or against the plaintiff?

KATE. Wait—wait! or the defendant will move for a new trial! When you have done all in your power to right this poor girl if, as I think, she has been wronged, then I will withdraw all further litigation, pay the costs, and—

GOOD. And what?

KATE. Be your counsellor by becoming your wife!

GOOD. I'll pay all the fees, and sign with you a contract of co-partnership for life!

Enter Alf. and Mrs. B. supporting Alice, whom they place in easy chair.

MRS. B. There, sit here, darling—you will be more comfortable here than anywhere else.

ALICE. Oh, how can I thank you all? I do not deserve so much kindness.

ALF. Well, we're the best judges of that, you know!

AL. (Grasping his hand) Brave sir, you little know how my heart swells with gratitude, for it is to you I owe my life.

ALF. Oh, well, never mind that—it was jolly fun for me!

MRS. B. Oh, what a boy it is! Just like his dear father—always trying to do good.

ALF. Mother, you make me blush. (aside.) I don't know what it is, but I really believe I'm in love; for whenever I'm in the presence of that girl, my heart commences dancing to the tune of Hail Columbia in double quick time. (aloud) Miss Alice, this is my friend William Goodwin, a lawyer—an honest one I assure you—so don't be afraid. I know him well; he's one out of a thousand.

AL. Thank you kindly, sir, for the interest you take in my welfare. I'll endeavor to deserve it.

GOOD. Miss, you need not feel called upon to tell us anything concerning yourself, unless you desire so to do through your own free will. It is enough for us to know that you have suffered and been oppressed, and we feel it our duty to do all in our power to alleviate and right your wrongs. Your parents are both dead, I believe?

AL. Alas! yes—they are both dead.

MRS. B. Poor child! never mind; I'll be a mother to you, and Kate shall be your sister.

ALF. Well, say, don't leave me out of the family.

KATE. Oh, you mustn't interfere with female affairs.

ALF. (aside) My sister's putting on airs just because her sweetheart is in the room.

GOOD. Now, if you have any secret to divulge, we are ready to hear it, and advise you accordingly. (they all seat themselves.)

AL. Listen, and I will tell you all. I was born in Jersey; my father was very wealthy—a good parent, and an upright man in all his business dealings. I had a brother who was several years my senior, but who died from injuries received by a railroad accident. I had also a sister five years younger than me. My mother died some three years ago, and my little sister, missing the endearing attentions of so kind a mother, did not long survive her loss. Thus were my father and I left alone; but day by day he grew despondent and melancholy, caused by his great affliction. Two years ago, while at boarding school, I was summoned home by the news that my father was in a dying condition—but when I arrived at my once happy home—he was dead! Thus was I left an orphan at the tender age of sixteen, without a guide to advise or befriend me. I had no relation upon whom I could call for counsel—few have—save an uncle on my father's side, and his business partner. He said my father, in his last moments, appointed him my guardian, and executor of his will—in which he bequeathed me the whole of his estate, both real and personal, upon becoming of age. My mother had a sister living somewhere in Pennsylvania, but where, I know not. I was taken to the home of my uncle, but he and his family treated me unkindly—sometimes cruelly.

GOOD. How long did you remain with him?

AL. Not long. With his consent, I returned to school at Albany. I remained there till about a year ago, when, one day, a strange man came to see me, saying that he had been sent by my uncle to bring me home on important business. I accompanied him. He appeared very affable, and seemingly invested with the authority which he assumed. I left school in his company, but did not return to Jersey City; I was taken to a strange place—where, I know not, and was kept a close prisoner till removed to the Den, from which, with Heaven's aid, you rescued me.

GOOD. Do you suspect your uncle of any complicity in this sad affair?

AL. Alas! I know not what to think; yet I confess to a strong suspicion that my uncle would rather hear of my death than of my restoration—in which case my fortune would be at his disposal.

GOOD. Humph! Did you ever sign your name to any paper dictated or presented by him to you?

AL. Never, although he once suggested my so doing; but I had often heard my father say that it was a dangerous pastime for people to place their signatures to papers without first knowing their purport.

GOOD. Many a man has lost his fortune by playfully signing his name to a piece of blank paper—which some enemy filled up to meet his own ends. Your name is—

AL. Alice Randall.

GOOD. Alice Randall! Tell me, quick—what was your mother's maiden name?

AL. Effie Goodwin.

GOOD. Good gracious!—it is the child of my dead aunt! Alice! Cousin! (embracing her.)

AL. Is this a dream? am I awake? or is this some happy phantasy which, upon awakening, will vanish as an idle dream?

GOOD. Nay—'tis a happy reality.

MRs. B. Oh, my! this excitement is too much for me.

ALF. Oh, no, mother, such excitement don't often occur—it is too jolly to kill.

AL. Oh, tell me cousin, do you often see my cruel uncle?

GOOD. No, dear, I have not seen him since I was 16 years of age—he would not know me now—so much the better.

AL. What mean you?

GOOD. You will shortly know all; suffice it for the present to know that your unnatural uncle is a deeply dyed villain.

AL. Are you sure the dreadful suspicion is verified?

ALF. Yes, it is all too true. I heard the scoundrels in the Den confess the whole villainous plot. Your uncle employed one of them to send you an angel to Heaven—but your beauty unnerved him, and defeated his purpose—while your uncle was made to believe that the terrible deed was accomplished.

AL. Oh, how can I thank you all for this happiness?

ALF. Well—hum—oh—what's the matter with me—eh? (aside) Confound it, I feel dry about the throat. I never before felt any trouble about speaking my mind. (aloud) The truth is—is—Miss Alice—is—that—that I—oh, lor, I can't do it.

KATE Why, mother, the truth is—Alf.'s in love with Alice.

ALF. (falling into chair) I'm dead!

AL. No—not dead; live, if not for yourself—for—for—me.

ALF. (jumping up) What! Ex—ex—ex—cuse—me—pshaw! but—

MRS. B. Well—I never—you don't mean to say that you are not glad?

ALF. Glad! that word is too insignificant to—to—ex—express—what—Washington's little hatchet did—when—no—no—I mean—Will, do me a favor!

GOOD. What is it?

ALF. Knock me down.

GOOD. Ha! ha! excuse me.

ALF. Please; you can do it with a feather. (bell without rings very loudly) Eh! what's that! how nervous I am.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, c., she with a dirty open letter in her hand.

MRS. B. Why, my dear, what ~~is~~ all this?

MRS. L. (giving letter to Alf.) Read! it is a clue sent us by Providence.

MR. L. What foolishness you talk. It is merely some plot to extort money—or some such flimsy experiment.

MRS. L. Never mind—you old croaker—ha! ha! my heart tells me differently. I will answer it in person.

MR. L. You are crazy.

MRS. L. Oh, no I'm not—not so much so as those who see and won't believe.

ALF. I will go with you.

MRS. L. You?

ALF. Yes, me! I'll fully disguise myself. I have another mission to fulfill, and I'll take this in the way. Who gave you this letter?

MRS. L. An old Irish woman.

ALF. Ah! describe her appearance!

MRS. L. I cannot—her face was concealed; but it didn't disguise her breath for all that—oh—how it did smell of whisky.

ALF. Why, then it can be none other than old Bet. We're in luck. I see it all! She seeks revenge because they maltreat her. She says in her letter to meet her in Connor's Lane, at 9 o'clock, and to bring \$100 with you, to enable her to escape far away, as the villains would kill her if they were aware that she revealed the secret of the hiding of Charlie Ross. Oh, ain't this jolly fun.

GOOD. Shall I accompany you, Alf?

ALF. No—I go with Mrs. Lewis; two's company, you know—three's none.

MRS. B. Oh, Alfred, be careful—do not get hurt.

ALF. Of course not. I ain't going to let anybody hurt me, unless they ask my permission; and then I'll tell 'em—"try it!" (in fighting attitude.)

AL. Be careful, for my sake, won't you?

ALF. Indeed I will. (about to kiss her—starts back) Hem—ah! may I?

AL. You may.

ALF. (kissing her) I thought perhaps I might.

KATE. Oh, my! right before company, too.

ALF. Company ! there's no company here—we are all friends.

MRS. L. Alfred, Do you meet me at the house at the proper time—I will be ready for you.

ALF. I will be there.

MR. L. I, too, had better go with you.

MRS. L. Indeed—but you had better not.

GOOD. Good bye—I go on a different mission, but one which I trust will result in happiness and repentance.

ALF. I go because there's fun in it—and because I am about to discover a herd of ravenous vultures to the world ! I'll be there in time !

SCENE SECOND. Private room in the store of Howard Randall. (2d groove.)

Table and two chairs brought on and placed in c., with books, pens, ink and paper. Mr. Randall discovered at table writing—blots letter, seals and directs it.

RANDALL. There, that's the fourth letter of the kind I've answered to-day. Charitable letters—bah ! charity begins at home with me—I love money too well to give it away. Ha ! ha ! A man without money, is no man at all—so the world says, and that is the verdict which governs us all.

Enter Goodwin, L. I E.

GOODWIN. Hem ! Mr. Randall, I believe ?

RAN. (starting up) That is my name, sir ; what do you want with me ?

GOOD. Ahem ! well, I'm out of employment—I've been idle some time—and it don't agree with me. My pockets are very low, so I thought I'd drop in and ask you to become my employer.

RAN. (turning aside and taking up paper) Bah ! I have nothing for you to do.

GOOD. Oh, I am not so very particular about the kind of work I have to do, as I am about the amount of wages I am to receive. You need not trouble yourself about finding anything of importance for me, you know—just so long as you pay me well I'm content.

RAN. Leave this room instantly, or I will call in an officer and have you arrested as a vagrant and a thief.

GOOD. Is THIEF the word ?

RAN. It is a hard word, but it was so meant.

GOOD. It is more severe coming from you.

RAN. I presume you have heard the word applied to you before.

GOOD. Has it ever been applied to you ?

RAN. (in great passion) Scoundrel—I'll—

GOOD. Oh, don't get excited—for you don't mean what you say. I never mind violent people like you, especially when I want them to grant me a favor, as I do now. When you become to know me better, you'll be sorry for being so uncivil. (throws himself into chair facing Randall, much to his indignation.)

RAN. (starting up) This is insufferable !

GOOD. (rises and gently pushes Randall into chair, and then sits on edge of table, swinging his legs) Oh, sit down, sit down, my friend ; I won't harm you in the least. I only want to talk over old times, and such things. Now, a friend of mine is going to get married, and—

RAN. Well, let him get married and go to the devil !

GOOD. Oh, no—this is to be the other kind of a marriage. Now I want your consent to—

RAN. What! what do you mean, sir? I don't know you, nor care to know your friend. Why do you come here and confide in me?

GOOD. Because without your consent he could not get married.

RAN. Why?

GOOD. Because the lady I refer to is YOUR NIECE! (aside) That shot tells.

RAN. (starting up confused) My niece? what niece? I have no niece.

GOOD. Oh, indeed—I thought you had—why, you used to have, didn't you?

RAN. In Heaven's name what mean you? speak!

GOOD. Oh, nothing—nothing. I must have made a mistake. (laying his hand on Randall's shoulder) I thought I had got the right man—that's all.

RAN. (with an air of injured pride) No, sir, you have NOT got the right man. Get out of my office at once, or I'll have you arrested.

GOOD. All right—as you please. (moving towards L. entrance, facing Randall.) I have made a mistake. Excuse me! I thought you MIGHT have been an uncle to one Alice Randall—probably you've heard of the name before—who was cruelly abducted from her school in Albany about a year ago by a certain scoundrel—may be you have heard or read of the villainous circumstances. I am sorry to have occasioned you any LITTLE inconvenience. Probably some other time I may have better luck. Good day, sir. (going.)

RAN. Stay! what kind of a blackmail story have you concocted to extort money from me? Know, sir, that I HAD a niece by the name of Alice Randall, but she died in Paris some three months ago, whither she went to finish her education.

GOOD. What a pity—isn't it? Then there's another Alice Randall come to life, who looks so much like the original that one must be the ghost of the other. Good day, sir. (going.)

RAN. (aside.) Good Heavens! alive? I have been duped. (aloud.) Stop—stop! What do you know of this girl?

GOOD. Oh, it's of no consequence to you, sir; I prefer to tell my story to the proper person.

RAN. And whom do you consider the proper person?

GOOD. Well, I think the Superintendent of the Police THE party to take notice of it.

RAN. Young man, what is your object in this? Do you want money?

GOOD. Of course I want money—show me the man that don't. Some are so eager to grasp wealth that they will even put their own relation out of the way for the sake of gaining it.

RAN. Tell me what you know of Alice Randall, and name your price.

GOOD. Say, look here! I came to you and asked for employment and you snubbed and wanted to arrest me. I don't ask the same favor of the same man twice—not if I understand myself, and I have a strong suspicion that I do.

RAN. I ask you as a favor—tell me all you know, and I will do the fair thing.

GOOD. Indeed! now what do you consider the FAIR THING?

RAN. Why, to pay you a fair price for your information.

GOOD. Oh, no; THAT won't do!

RAN. Then what will? Name your terms.

GOOD. My COMMANDS are that you acknowledge that you caused the employment of certain villains to rid you of your niece, in order that you could possess her property. Also to restore her property just as it was left by her father; otherwise the law shall take its course, and publically brand you—Howard Randall, Esq., the wealthy and RESPECTABLE merchant—as a villain and would-be murderer!

RAN. (placing his hand in his breast) Blackmailing scoundrel! Do you *dare* accuse me of such a crime? I'll teach you who I am! (draws pistol.)

GOOD. (quickly presenting pistol—tableaux.) I know already! ha! ha! You are

not the only villain with whom I have had dealings, and when my duty demands my dealings with such gentry, I always go prepared. Lay down that pistol!

RAN. (throwing pistol on table, Goodwin picks it up.) Curses upon you!

GOOD. Oh, don't waste your breath. Bad men's curses always rebound back to them. Do I accuse you of this crime? Yes, a thousand times! I not only accuse, but have living proof of your rascality. You shall have an opportunity to prove your INNOCENCE in a court of law. There is my card! (throws card upon table.) Now prepare your defence—if you can!

RAN. (picking up and reading card.) What do I see; My own nephew?

GOOD. Yes, I am sorry to say; but your accuser withal.

RAN. (reads card.) "William Goodwin, Attorney and Counsellor at Law." (sinks in chair.) I am lost! It has come at last as I knew it must. The girl I have so terribly wronged, and whom I thought dead, now rises up against me as a denouncing angel. In my troubled sleep I have seen her form like an accusing spirit, pointing at me the finger of scorn. Sir, I am a disgraced man—I am guilty!

GOOD. The old, old story; the devil pleads guilty after conviction.

RAN. I am in your power. I deserve it all. do with me as you please. I am ready. To-night I will close my eyes upon this world forever!

GOOD. No! 'tis only the coward who takes his own life. Live and repent. Are you willing to restore Alice Goodwin's fortune?

RAN. I am!

GOOD. And renounce all further claims upon her?

RAN. Yes! I am willing to make all the reparation in my power. I thought her dead—murdered at my instigation. Thank Heaven, that crime is not upon my soul. I am ready!

GOOD. (throwing documents upon the table) Sign these.

RAN. (examining them) Must this be published to the world?

GOOD. No, that is not necessary—for the sake of our family, your vile actions shall be buried in oblivion. The world is censorious, and too eager to gossip—and Alice's name must not be the subject for scandal and idle conjecture.

RAN. Is this known to strangers?

GOOD. Only to a few—I'll answer for their silence.

RAN. Is my niece well?

GOOD. She is no longer your niece—it is better that you should be strangers. She will shortly become the wife of a worthy man, upon whom she can look for protection against enemies. She is now well, but has been dangerously ill—thanks to your amiable care. Sign!

RAN. (signing) There! in two days I will surrender all moneys and deeds, belonging to Alice Randall, over to you, and trust then my mind will let me rest.

GOOD. I trust you will live a better man. In two days I will call upon you for a full settlement—if you fail—beware of public exposure.

RAN. I will keep my word—I swear it!

GOOD. (holding up documents) Then I will keep mine with you.

Tableaux. End of Act Third.

ACT IV.

SCENE FIRST. Connor's Lane—a dirty street—1st gooves—lights down. Enter Mrs. Lewis and Alf., cautiously, L. Mrs. L. is disguised in an old dress, Alf in an old suit.

ALF. This is the place—but she is not here yet.

MRS. L. We are a little before the time, I think. You say you know her?

ALF. Yes, but she does not know me—I was disguised as a girl, you know—and even when they discovered I was a man, my face was not known to them.

MRS. L. You must not let her see you when she comes.

ALF. Certainly not; I will stand aside—hear all I can—find out the house in which Charlie is confined—go for the police—and have some fun.

MRS. L. Would you recognize me in this dress?

ALF. Well, no; and if I didn't know you, I shouldn't want to—you look as much like an old beggar woman as you could wish.

MRS. L. Hush! step aside—I see a figure moving this way—it must be her.

ALF. All right—let her come. Don't be afraid, for I am here with a watchful eye upon you.

MRS. L. Quick—quick! she's here!

ALF. I vanish! (hides behind R. wing.)

MRS. L. Now to see what a woman can do.

Enter Bet very cautiously, L. 1 E.

BET. Hist!

MRS. L. I am here!

ALF. (aside) So am I.

BET. It is well. Did ye bring the money?

MRS. L. Never mind the money.

BET. Och, an' but I do mind the money, ye see.

MRS. L. Well, I'll MIND it till you redeem your promise to me, and tell me what you know of the child's whereabouts.

BET. Och—but I'd first like to take a squint at th' darlin' greenbacks—it's me native color; an' as green's good for the eyes, give me a peep, an' thin th' bether I can see ye to talk to.

MRS. L. We are only wasting time. I did not come here to cheat you, but to aid you as I expect you to aid me in recovering the child.

BET. Thin ye've got th' money wid ye?

ALF. (aside) What a coaxing old dame it is.

MRS. L. Yes—yes! Here—satisfy yourself. (showing money) Do you see them in the dark?

BET. Och, th' beauties—I could see 'em through a mountain. (about to take them.)

MRS. L. Oh, no you don't! Here is an hundred dollars—when you give me all the information you promised—then they are yours.

BET. You will dale honorably wid me?

MRS. L. If you will with me.

BET. Och, I wouldn't CHATE a babe unborn.

ALF. (aside) May-be not—but I wouldn't trust you with a BORN ONE—the old Shylock.

MRS. L. Now where is the child?

BET. In an ould hut, beyant Howell street—in the middle ov a vacant piece ov ground.

ALF. (aside) I've passed it an hundred times.

BET. Well, they have a child there—they call him Peter Smith—but that's not his name—an' I don't remember th' right one; gin has gone agin me memory lately.

MRS. L. Is the name of the child Charlie Ross?

BET. Sure an' that's th' very name.

MRS. L. Is that the only child there?

BET. It is—they have sint th' others away. This same child used to be hid in a small room in a certain house; but wan day a man dressed in women's togs found out and rescued a girl from the place—och! what a divil he was.

ALF. (aside) She means me.

BET. He had about FORTY pistols in his hands at the time.

ALF. (aside) How very drunk Bet must have been to make FORTY out of TWO.

MRS. L. No matter about that—but about the child.

BET. To be sure—about the child. Well, you take this shawl and hood, an' give me yours. (they exchange) Have ye got a brogue?

MRS. L. Not much, I'm afraid.

BET. Och, it' a pity yer edication's bin so neglected. Ye must knock at the door of this house three times; ye will hear a voice speak—"who's there?" thin ye must say "Bet, it is!" an' thin yer in. Be careful how ye act—pretend to be drunk, d'ye mind; ye mus do me justice on the drunk.

MRS. L. Very well, I understand—what more?

BET. Ye must be careful how you tread the floor—thim divils in there will trick ye if they want to. There is a trap in the floor—and a deep well is under it. It can be so arranged, by taking th' brace from under it, that a person stepping upon it, will moighty soon get a dose of more well wather than they'll stomach—so be careful ov it.

ALF. (aside) How clever the devil is.

MRS. L. You are sure the child is there?

BET. I'll take me oath to it.

ALF. (aside) I wonder what her oath's worth?

BET. Now mind—ye must be careful, and don't forgit to kape up the dignity ov old Bet.

ALF. (forgetting himself) Dignity! ha! ha! ha!

BET. Ah—what—betrayed! (draws knife) So ye would chate me—would ye?

ALF. (aiming pistol at Bet) Put up that bodkin!

MRS. L. Alfred, you have ruined all!

BET. Aha! this is the way, fair lady, ye kape yer promise, is it? ah, ye are fine Christians. Ye can lie as stoutly as th' divil's own family—an' sometimes a little harder.

MRS. L. You are wrong—I have no desire to cheat you.

BET. Thin what's he here for?

MRS. L. You don't suppose I'd come to such a lonely place as this without protection—do you?

BET. May-be not—may-be not. But the money?

MRS. L. (handing it) 'Tis here!

BET. (grasping money) Aha! ye divils! what would man and woman not do to get ye—ha! ha!

MRS. L. Come, Alfred—it is time to work.

ALF. I'll leave you near the place—then go for the police, and return for you and the child. Come.

BET. Success to ye—but be careful—be watchful—and don't forgit the brogue.

MRS. L. I will not fail.

ALF. If you do, I wont! (both exit L. & E.)

BET. Ha! ha! there they go! Now, Martin Bolton, ye will rue th' day when ye struck old Bet. I'll have such revenge that will cost ye yer life. Ha! ha! Now to escape from here before the bloodhounds suspect me work. This revenge is sweet—sweeter thin gin—ha! ha! (exit R. & E.)

SCENE SECOND.—Interior of the Hut—a very dirty room. Door c. Window r.
c. A trap in stage r. c, upon which stands a barrel. A table and two chairs on.
An old table under window.

BOL. (discovered reading paper.) Fiends and furies! Mosher has been shot at Bay Ridge in attempting to break into a house, and Douglass is bagged. The wound Mosher received in the head when he was shot in the Den by that spy, must have turned his brain, or he would never have exposed himself to such folly. The boys in New York have been scattered, and, in fact, the entire gang is dwindling down to a cypher. Fools! see what too much ambition will bring a man to. I'm getting tired of this baby-stealing business—it don't pay. I must get into something more respectable; turn preacher, or better still, incorporate a new Emigrant or Freedman's Savings Bank, with a cash capital of \$1,000,000, and a surplus of \$800,000, that would read well in gilt letters on a glass door. I might spring something on the Centennial—but then, people are getting so confoundedly sharp, lately, that it's hard to gull them. They keep their eyes on Washington city and see how the thing is done, for they well know that there is hardly one man there that can be trusted with a burglar-proof safe. This child, too, is a white elephant on my shoulders. There's no chance to get the reward now; the detectives are itching for it, and I know they wouldn't go snooks with me now—they are too greedy. Poor Mosher! How hard he tried to keep the Ross boy all to himself. Ha! ha! he got drunk one night and revealed the secret in his sleep, and— (three taps at door) Who's there?

SIM. (without.) Simons!

BOL. (opens door and admits Simons) Well, you didn't hurry yourself, did you?

SIM. Well, I should say I did—I've been running about pretty lively, I should say.

BOL. For what reason?

SIM. For the reason that two detectives and a peeler were after me—but I gave them the slip nicely.

BOL. What was the matter?

SIM. Well, ye see I saw a fine looking old codger strutting along as if he was the "monarch of all he surveyed." I happened to notice a very valuable gold watch chain dangling from his vest pocket, and suddenly remembering that my cash was low, and that a man can't live without it, why I quite accidentally tripped full against the old gent, with an "excuse me, sir!" broke his chain, was about to nib it—when lo! I saw two detectives and a peeler looking at me—I ran—they ran, and—and—phew! here I am.

BOL. You're a fool!

SIM. Oh, I am, am I?

BOL. Yes, and I'm another, for trusting you with anything of importance.

SIM. What do you mean by that?

BOL. I mean just what I say—you're a consummate numskull, or you'd never attempt to bag a watch, especially at such a time as this when our every action is spotted. The next thing they will discover this Hut, and then we ARE gone. Not content with knowing all this, you must needs expose yourself by a fool-hardy act, and thus excite the detectives against us more than ever.

SIM. Did it ever occur to you that I must live?

BOL. It has often occurred to me that you would be better dead.

SIM. May-be you would like to do the job?

BOL. No, I'm not one of that kidney. Live and kill yourself.

SIM. Live! you won't let anybody live but yourself. You live on your wits, while—

BOL. While you don't, for you haven't brains enough to grasp a \$5 note if it was staring you in the face.

SIM. I know it—for if you were by, your selfish hand would snatch it from me.

BOL. 'Tis false—I am not selfish.

SIM. You lie—you are!

BOL. (seizing him by the throat) What? you call me a liar? you pale-faced, sneaking cur, I'll—but no, I'll not bandy words with such as you. (throws him off, and against barrel, upsetting it and causing it to roll up the stage.)

SIM. Martin Bolton, you'll repent that blow.

BOL. Bah! barking dogs never bite.

SIM. You'll feel my teeth yet—mark ye that.

BOL. I tell you, let me alone—I'm in a bad humor, and might forget myself.

SIM. It wouldn't be the first time.

BOL. Will you be quiet?

SIM. No—curse you—no!

BOL. Damnation—I'll brain you. (seizes chair and is about rushing upon Simons, when he draws a pistol and presents it at Bolton's head) Ah!

SIM. I've had enough of your bluster. You can't conquer me. I may look like a fool, but you'll not find me such—you don't know me. Put down that chair!

BOL. I will—over your head. (is about to strike Simons when three taps are heard at door) Ah! what's that! Who's there?

MRS. L. (without, imitating Bet) Och, an' sure an' it's me, mesilf.

BOL. (opening door when enters Mrs. L., disguised as old Bet) What kept you so long—your old friend?

MRS. L. (pretending to be drunk) An' what old frind is that, eh?

BOL. What other could it be than whisky?

MRS. L. Faith, an' its the only comfort I have.

BOL. It would be a comfort if it killed you. (exit L.)

MRS. L. (aside.) What a dreadful place this is, but I'll brave all to restore dear little Charlie to his mother's aching heart. Can it be possible that the woman has deceived me in order to extort money? I won't believe it; I'll hope for the best. (knocks against Simons) Oh!

SIM. Go to the devil! (exits L.)

MRS. L. What a very civil spoken gentleman that is. I must be cautious lest I get myself into trouble. Where can the child be? There are only two rooms in this hut. There's a little den of a room there, I believe. (points L.) The door is shut—hark! I hear men quarreling. Where can that trap be the old woman spoke of? Ah! here's a ring—yes—it moves the boards and— (opens trap and looks down.) Oh, Heavens, how dark it is! Never mind, I'll protect myself, and if the worst comes to the worst, why— Oh! here's the support—I'll remove that—there, it has fallen down! oh, how deep that well must be, for—yes, I heard a splash. What can they use it for, I wonder; it can never be that—ah quick! some one comes. (hastily closes trap and sits in a chair as if asleep, as Bolton enters with child asleep in his arms.)

BOL. Here, you old fool, take the child!

MRS. L. (takes child and looks eagerly at it) Oh, Heavens, 'tis he!

BOL. What's that? What d'ye mean?

MRS. L. Och, an' I thought I saw a rat.

BOL. Rats? ha! ha! you talk as if you'd never seen one before. Why, you drunken old fool, it's snakes that you see—not rats.

MRS. L. Is the child drugged?

BOL. Curse ye—if you ain't that drunk you don't even remember having given the brat a drug yourself.

MRS. L. Och, an' sure an' I did—I did.

BOL. The brat is becoming troublesome. I'll get rid of it to-night, and drop it

down the trap. It'll be safe there.

MRS. L. Oh, no, no!

BOL. What? and I say yes! yes! Why, you old hag, what d'ye mean by no, no! when it was yourself who proposed it.

MRS. L. (aside.) Oh, Heaven, is it possible that that old woman can be such a fiend? It's too horrible to believe.

BOL. Here, take off that infernal old hood and shawl—I'm sick of seeing them on you.

MRS. L. I'll not do it—I'm cold.

BOL. What, cold you old fool, with your carcass full of whisky? Take them off, I say.

MRS. L. I will not.

BOL. Then I'll do it for you. (they struggle, but she, having the child in her arms, is not able to prevent, and he pulls off both hood and shawl, discovering her to him. He starts back.) Damnation! a-spy! in Bet's clothes—ah! then she has betrayed me. Who are you?

MRS. L. (rushing past him with child in her arms to R. of trap—he being on the L.) No matter who I am!

BOL. But I say it is! What was your purpose in coming here?

MRS. L. To bring such villains as you to justice.

BOL. Ha! ha! an amateur detective, eh? You ain't smart. The place for you should be home sewing on your husband's buttons. Ha! ha! Well, now you ARE here, what are you going to do? Don't know, eh? I should think not.

MRS. L. Stand aside, and let me depart!

BOL. Ha! ha! Well, now, if that AIN'T woman-like! Always asking a man to do some impossible thing. (takes chair, sits facing her, crossing his legs.) How much money have you got about you, eh?

MRS. L. I have none!

BOL. Well, now that's a pity! don't carry your pin money with you, eh?

MRS. L. Let me depart unmolested, and you shall be well rewarded.

BOL. You don't say so! what! and expose me to the police, eh?

MRS. L. I promise not to betray your secret to a living soul.

BOL. Oh, yes you would.

MRS. L. I will not!

BOL. And I say you would! There was never but one woman I ever heard of that did keep a secret, and she was a fool. Who was the woman who put you on the track, eh?

MRS. L. I will not tell you!

BOL. Then I'll tell you—'twas old Bet. Ha! ha! She had a grudge against me because I wouldn't call her pet names. She thought, d'ye see, that she'd have revenge on me—but bless your innocent eyes—she's played a big stake into my hands. Now you see I happen to know you. (rises) Mrs. Lewis, allow me to introduce to you your very humble servant, Martin Bolton, Esq. Ha! ha!

MRS. L. (aside) Oh, why don't Alfred come? If he does not come soon, I must protect myself at every hazard.

BOL. (sits) Now, I've heard your husband is well fixed. I heard that some time ago. Also, that you have some valuable jewels. I know you have a beautiful watch, which I tried hard to gain possession of some two months ago, while I had the honor to ride with you in a street car, but you were more sharp THAT day than you are THIS.

MRS. L. Scoundrel!

BOL. (rising and bowing) Thank you; that is also one of my names—I forgot to mention it. (sits.) I also know that you possess a fine assortment of solid silver plate

—to gain which, about 2 o'clock one morning three weeks ago, I made a call at your residence.

MRS. L. Ah, then you—

BOL. Yes. I was sorry to find it necessary to awake you from your pleasant dreams—you must excuse me, but business is imperative.

MRS. L. You were richly frustrated in the attempt—villain as you are.

BOL. (bows) Thank you—another of my names. You see people have grown disgustingly particular lately, and have invented wires, alarms, and other such amusing contrivances; and have introduced them in their domestic economy, that, really, an HONEST man has no chance whatever, except in politics, to make an easy living.

MRS. L. Would that that might have been your last.

BOL. Well, it came very nigh being so; for some kind friend sent a leaden-messenger after me from the second-story window, and which little pillet went through my hat, two inches above the brain.

MRS. L. Know, then, 'twas I that fired the shot, and would that I had been more steady in my aim.

BOL. (bows) Oh, indeed; it was you, eh? Allow me to return my sincere thanks. I congratulate you upon your pluck; you should be sent to the Centennial as a representative American heroine. So it was you, eh? How kind—I must cancel the obligation, and give you a receipt in full.

MRS. L. (aside) Oh, WHY don't Alfred come? This villain in desperate, and means me harm.

BOL. Now to business. Notwithstanding the unfriendly feeling you entertain towards me, I am willing to compromise matters with you. You see, after the very shabby treatment I experienced at your residence, I determined to have revenge—that's the word, revenge. In a day or two after, I learned that you and the Ross's were close relations, and that they had a boy whom they worshipped more than anything else in the world. So you see, I determined to abduct the child, and thus bring matters to a crisis. I had everything arranged, when I suddenly learnt that an old friend of mine had conceived the very same idea, and thus robbed me, for a time, of the pleasure of controlling the little affair myself. But my poor friend suddenly departed this life, and has gone to a better world.

MRS. L. Wretch!

BOL. Thank you—another of my names. So, you see, my revenge is DOUBLY COMPLETE, for I now have you BOTH in my power.

MRS. L. Do not dare to offer me violence, or you will suffer for it.

BOL. Violence to a lady—oh, no! not at present—or not at all, if you will be reasonable.

MRS. L. What do you mean?

BOL. I want a ransom for you and the child. \$10,000 for the child—and that's cheap. For you, as follows: Your diamond rings, necklace and ear-drops; \$5,000 in cash, and as much of your silver plate as you can CONVENIENTLY part with—you to write me an order for these little trifles upon your husband, the other upon Mr. Ross. I will see that both parties get it, and if they consent, you are free; if not, you shall stay here and become my housekeeper till such time as your dear husband thinks you worth buying back. Do you consent?

MRS. L. Never!

BOL. What! you insist upon coming the bold over me? (throwing aside chair) See here, I'll have no more of this! You're in MY power now!

MRS. L. Don't be too sure of that.

BOL. How—you threaten me still? Why you trembling fool, there's death beneath your feet!

MRS. L. If you wish for life, don't approach me—I beg of you!

BOL. What—a warning? Give me that sleeping brat!

MRS. L. Never!

BOL. Ah! d'ye brave me still?

MRS. L. Beware of me—I am desperate—I am but a woman—but woman as I am I DEFY YOU!

BOL. The devil take you—I'll teach you who I am! (rushes over to her—he steps upon the trap—crash—it falls in with him—he catches hold of the edge—she screams) Help! Simons! Simons! help!

Simons rushes in.

SIM. What's all this?

BOL. Save me—that she devil has entrapped me!

SIM. SAVE you? yes, curse ye—I'll save you! (draws pistol and clubbing it) Martin Bolton, your time has come—you die!

BOL. Mercy! mercy!

SIM. None from me! Die! die!! die!!! (strikes Bolton's hands with butt end of pistol as he endeavors to lift himself up—he disappears with a loud cry) So much for you! Give the devil my compliments.

MRS. L. Oh, what have you done?

SIM. I have committed a murder—you have seen the deed, but you shall never live to tell it. Give me that child! You won't? (snatches child from her arms, and places it on table under window—she falls upon her knees. Red lights up.)

MRS. L. Do not steep your hands in more blood! Mercy!

SIM. I know not the word! (he seizes her—she struggling, and crying—“Help! help!” He grasps her by the hair—draws knife and holds it over her throat) It won't hurt much—it will only tickle for a moment. Tell Martin Bolton I sent you to keep him company!

ALF. (crash—he suddenly appears at window, presenting two pistols) No! tell him so YOURSELF!! (fires—Simons staggers.)

SIM. Ah! tis only a scratch! (rushes to window.)

ALF. Well, this ain't! (fires—Simons falls under window—Alf. jumps in—snatches up child and places it in Mrs. L.'s arms) He is found! (crash—the back of the scene falls, discovering Police, and a beautiful landscape at back. The following characters rush in: Mr. Lewis, to his wife, R. C., Goodwin, Kate, Mrs. Baker and Alice, to Alf. C., who embraces her.

MR. L. My darling, are you hurt?

MRS. L. No, dear; but I've had sufficient romance to last me for a life time.

ALF. Thank Heaven! it is successfully accomplished! Heaven, who's kind, protecting hand has restored a darling child to a broken-hearted mother. Alice—wife! mother! Kate! all! I have NOT failed! I made a vow in a jolly, though sincere way, to restore Charley; I have not found it ALL fun, but my heart beats with pride when I think I have been the humble means of finding

CHARLIE ROSS.

TABLEAUX.

END.



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